

**OPENING STATEMENT OF  
THE HONORABLE VERNON J. EHLERS  
RANKING MEMBER  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Federal STEM Education Programs: Educators' Perspectives*

June 6, 2007

2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

2318 Rayburn House Office Building

STEM education is a priority for this nation. Thanks to a constantly increasing understanding of the importance of STEM to our national competitiveness, I no longer must define what the “S”, “T”, “E” and “M” stand for; today, my colleagues are familiar with the acronym. Even with this improving awareness of STEM, there is still more that the federal government can do to improve K-16 STEM education in the U.S.

The Academic Competitiveness Council (ACC) was created by Congress to catalog and coordinate the STEM education projects and programs currently supported by the federal government. I commend the agencies that participated in this endeavor. The charge to the Council was a challenging one, and the report reflects the breadth and depth of programs that exist at our federal agencies. From the start, I harbored a general concern that the ACC might overzealously seek out seemingly duplicative programs and inadvertently encourage their demise. Instead, I think the ACC report sheds light on the diversity and uniqueness of programs, and sends a clear message that Congress must authorize adequate evaluation capacity for federal STEM education programs. It is crucial that we evaluate these programs with the most appropriate and rigorous techniques available.

Overall, the ACC report provides a useful foundation for future coordination and collaboration, so that federal agencies can work together to leverage STEM resources and communicate successes as well as failures. I am pleased that the recently reestablished National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) will follow through on actions recommended by the ACC.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how they are moving toward increased collaboration, as well as becoming more educated about the STEM education programs at their respective agencies.